

# ANTICA MASSERIA VENDITTI

## CERTIFIED ORGANIC



Back in 1988, the Italian wine guide Gambero Rosso introduced the word organic for the first time with its review of Venditti's wines. For over 20 years, Nicola Venditti has believed in tilling the soil and being certified organic. Those who still believe that "organic" equals "non-scientific" should think again. Nicola is an enologist and the very incarnation of a contadino (farmer). The vineyards have been in the family for over 400 years (thus the "antica" part of Antica Masseria), and he feels deeply passionate about his territory of Sannio, an area that may be less well known than the neighboring Taurasi, but is a real forgotten gem; see the picture here of nearby San'Agata dei Goti.

Nicola Venditti eschews oak and kneels at the altar of steel; letting these wines really show their clean and distinct fruit of the native grapes (some of which he only cultivates). Come before harvest, and Mr. Venditti will you taste the rare grape Barbertta in his didactic vineyard; and explain how Montepulciano and Barbera where catch-words for varieties people knew by sight by didn't have a set name for. His cantina is clean and he gladly whistles out PH and acid levels for those inclined. This humanist-techno-geek approach, he explains, is a combination of the "humanity" of ancient methods and local varieties, together with the "rationality" offered by technology.

For example, the photograph is not about lunar cycles, but is the night-time harvest he favors in order to bring in the grapes at a lower temperature for more precise aromatics and fruit flavors. The cleaner and fresher that the fruit is brought in, the cleaner and fresher the wine. The harvest continues through the night and ends with a celebration: a large traditional breakfast, replete with wine, bread, and other various sweet and salty foods. Bread dipped in wine is a favorite.

The humanity-cum-technology theme continues in the didactic vineyard, where Nicola has assembled and labeled the grape varieties in an effort to show the differences between Falanghina, Grieco di Castelvenere, Piediroso, Barbetta, Aglianico, and more. When we were there soon before harvest we did a tasting of the grapes themselves, followed by the wines accompanying a lengthy lunch.

That same vibrancy of fruit we tasted in the grapes on the vine was echoed in the wines. And that may be the best way to summarize these wines: all different and unique, but all with clean vibrant fruit (no Brett or oxidation), and they are not in the least marred by wood or out of place high alcohol.

The Falanghina is round and agile; the fresh side of pineapple, with a creamy lemon consistency. The Aglianico is edgy, with high-tone red fruit and an alluring nose of bark and antique rose. The Barbetta is low in tannins, floral, packed with dark fruit; we are thankful that the Vendetti ancestors saved it from the phylloxera plague.

The two uvaggi or field blends are not to be underestimated, with their unassuming Sannio DOC Rosso or Sannio DOC Bianco labels. Here are wines that highlight native grapes and offer a certain complexity of the field blend itself; here the whole is definitely greater than the parts. Try them and you'll see what we mean.

- BARBETTA "GOATEE" WINE MEETS AGRODOLCE, SWEET-N-SOUR.
- ORGANICS AND TECHNOLOGY AT THE ALTAR OF STEEL
- FAMILY STYLE! LOW ALCOHOL CAMPANIAN FIELD BLENDS FROM NATIVE GRAPES



## VENDITTI SANNIO BIANCO



### Tasting Notes:

Field blend of 70 % Grieco di Castelvenere and 30% Cerreto, an indigenous clone. Straw-yellow color with green apple and lemon

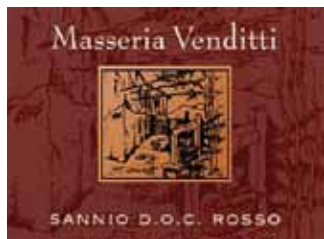
with some hoppy beer notes. Easy-drinking and zippy. Try by itself or with seafood, white bean soup, fresh cheese, etc.

**Vineyard:** Sannio DOC

**Vinification:** Hand picked; native yeasts; vinified in steel; light filtration; bottle aged one year.

**Awards:** '07 and '08 Sannio Rosso and Bianco recommended, Slow Food Guide.

## VENDITTI SANNIO ROSSO



### Tasting Notes:

Field blend of 50% "Montepulciano," 30% Olivella, 20% Aglianico. Deep purple color; nose of mulberry and cured black olives; walnut skin tan-

nins; top flower notes. The native Olivella give that a hint of flower, as well as, some structure to the wine. "Montepulciano is in quotes because it seems very different (in taste and morphology) from the Montepulciano found in Abruzzo and elsewhere. Long live the daily drinkin' field blend and family style meals.

**Vineyard:** Sannio DOC Rosso

**Vinification:** Hand picked under the cool of night. Fermented in steel.

**Awards:** '07 and '08 Sannio Rosso and Bianco recommended, Slow Food Guide.

## VENDITTI AGLIANICO 'MARRAIOLI'

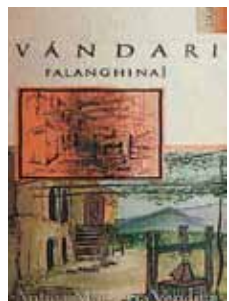


**Tasting Notes:** 100% Aglianico. Like all the Venditti wines, clean, fresh fruit. Not a heavy, sludgy Aglianico. Downright edgy, high-tone small red fruits; alluring notes of bark and rose. Elegant and complex; unravels in the glass (with no volatile acidity).

**Vineyard:** Sannio DOC; Marraioli Vineyard

**Vinification:** Native yeasts. Hand picked under the cool of night. Fermented in steel. Minimal filtration.

## VENDITTI FALANGHINA 'VÀNDARI'



**Tasting Notes:** 100 % Falanghina. Green apple and lemon with cream; engaging with a texture that's very energetic and tightly knit, leading to a long finish; medium bodied.

**Vineyard:** Sannio DOC

**Vinification:** Native yeasts. Hand picked under the cool of night. Fermented in steel. Light filtration and finished in bottle until ready.

**Awards:** 2009 Falanghina Felix Award Winner, Italian Somm. Assoc. ; W&S 88pts

## VENDITTI BARBETTA



**Tasting Notes:** 100% native grape Barbera-Barbeta. Barbeta was the the nickname given to an ancestor of the Venditti family, who saved the vineyard from destruction in the 1930's. He sported a barbeta, or, goatee. As far as we know, only Venditti has this variety. If you like the floral notes

in Lacrima di Morro, give this a try: Cherry, wild berries, and VIOLETS. Low tannins. 20 cases brought into the States. A great wine to figure out a pairing for; goes excellent with most agrodolce, or, sweet and sour dishes.

**Vineyard:** Sannio DOC

**Vinification:** Native yeast. Hand picked under the cool of night. Fermented in steel. Minimal filtration.

**Awards:** Wine Spectator '90